

Noble Eagle, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. We need to continue to assist these selfless individuals. About 153,000 of them are still mobilized.

At today's hearing on the draft legislation, six Administration officials testified to the overall support of the bill. Craig Duehring, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, stated in his testimony that, "Increasing from 18 months to 24 months the maximum period of employer-provided health care plan coverage that an employee covered by USERRA may elect to continue is an important amendment that will align this coverage period with the length of time for which reservists can be mobilized under the current mobilization authority."

The extension of health care coverage will be especially helpful to federal government employees. Dan Blair, Deputy Director of the Office of Personnel Management, informed the Committee this morning that, "Last year, we asked agencies how much of the Federal Employees Health Benefits they pay for these reservists. I am pleased to report most agencies pay both shares. Of the 114 agencies surveyed, 96 pay the full premium." The "full premium" means the employer-employee share. The federal government needs to be the model employer when it comes to reserve and Guard members.

With regard to reinstating the reporting requirements for the Department of Labor, Office of Special Counsel, and Department of Justice, all three supported this measure. In fact, Mr. Charles Ciccolella, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Veterans' Employment and Training at the Department of Labor, stated in his testimony that, "In the past, the Department found this requirement to be useful."

With the documented support of the "USERRA Health Care: Coverage Extension Act of 2004," I encourage my colleagues to add their names in support of this timely legislation.

ELKINS HIGH SCHOOL'S VARSITY SOFTBALL CHAMPIONS

HON. TOM DeLAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to recognize some special constituents of mine, the members of the Elkins High School varsity softball team from Missouri City, for capping off their perfect 2004 season with the school's first Texas State championship.

To Coach Jim McClanahan, and assistant coaches Jim Smittle and Amy Mattes, thank you for the enormous amount of time and effort you gave to this team and for helping these girls live up to their potential. Without your hard work and dedication, this team could not have gotten where it is today.

And to the team itself—Alyssa Garza, Caryn Danielson, Abbie Palmieri, Amy Palmieri, Brittini Taylor, Courtney Cornett, Erin Howe, Erin Tresselt, Jamie Hinshaw, Jessie Rodriguez, Rachel Isenhower, Ragan Blake, Sam Dyess, Tiffany Williams, Ryan Graybill, Jenna Lamoreux, Shallon Watson, and Ashley Patterson—congratulations! I'm proud to represent you all in the House of Representatives.

While it's pretty clear from their record that there's a lot of talent on this team, you can't win 39 straight games on talent alone. It takes hard work, perseverance, and dedication—virtues this team has exemplified during its stellar season.

It's great to have talent, but it's better to have commitment. As someone once said, "It doesn't matter how good you are if you don't work hard."

These girls set themselves a goal this year and accomplished it. To have gone an entire season without a single loss is an amazing achievement and a testament to the character of these young ladies.

I am honored to enter their names and accomplishments into the RECORD today.

IN RECOGNITION OF RITA MORENO

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding performer, actress, and entertainer Rita Moreno for receiving the "nation's highest civilian award recognizing exceptional meritorious service," the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Rita Moreno has been an inspiration to many throughout her remarkable career as an actress on screen and stage. Her performances have been recognized with Grammy, Tony, and Emmy Awards, and she received an Oscar in 1961 for her performance as Anita in *West Side Story*. She has, in fact, been listed in the Guinness Book of World Records for her achievements and being the only female performer to have won all four of the most prestigious performing arts awards. Today, June 23, 2004 she will be honored at a White House ceremony with the presentation of the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

A dramatic actress, singer, dancer, comedienne, Ms. Moreno has portrayed a variety of different roles going beyond traditional limitations and proving that Latino performers are not limited to "ethnic" roles. Her versatility has led to decades of success on stage, screen, and television.

Ms. Moreno was born Rosa Delores Alverio in Humacao, a small town in Puerto Rico. At the age of five years old, she joined her mother in New York and the following year she started her dancing lessons. Rosita's immense talent became evident at a young age. By the age of thirteen, Rita Moreno had made her Broadway debut in *"Skydrift"*. She signed her first movie contract at the age of seventeen.

Ms. Moreno made some thirty films early in her career, and was often typecast as a Mexican spitfire or an Indian maiden. After a decade of these stereotypical roles she was cast as the strong-willed and independent Anita in the movie version of *West Side Story*. It was only after Rita Moreno won an Oscar for her outstanding performance as "Anita", which gained international acclaim, that she was finally recognized as a major talent. Indeed, the film's depiction of ethnic division and urban violence can be seen as a foreshadowing of the civil rights struggles and general social turbulence of subsequent years. Rita Moreno's depiction of a young woman believing in and pursuing the American dream was vivid and memorable.

In the early 1970s Ms. Moreno appeared in children's television programs providing inspiration to Hispanic children, with the intent to assure them of their value as citizens of society. Rita Moreno has also been the guest star on a wide variety of television productions, both here and abroad, including highly regarded educational television programs as well as starring in her own TV series.

Becoming engaged in so many facets of entertainment, Rita Moreno, early in 1978, turned her attention for the first time to live performances, creating an act that has attracted outstanding critical acclaim. All things considered, Rita Moreno's success goes far beyond her ability to act and sing or win awards. She has strived throughout her career to push past the boundaries that have marginalized actors who did not seem to represent mainstream America and cast Latinos and other minorities in menial roles. She continues to keep busy performing concerts across the country as a guest artist with symphony orchestras. In addition to her film, stage, television and concert careers, Ms. Moreno fills her spare time by lecturing to various organizations as well as to university audiences. She is also involved with a number of civic and charitable organizations and events.

Rita Moreno is a member of the Board of Directors of Third World Cinema, a company which is interested in creating opportunities in the film industry for minority groups, and has served as a member of the Board of Directors of the National Foundation for the Arts, the Alvin Ailey Dance Company, the Joffrey Ballet and the Los Angeles Theatre Center, as well as many other worthwhile organizations. Ms. Moreno is currently a member of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities and a commissioner of the very prestigious Presidential Fellowship Committee.

It is a special honor for me to recognize Rita Moreno and her great work in performing arts and to salute her leadership and achievements.

HONORING BRIAN BRADY

HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my constituent Brian Brady who is retiring as Chief of Police of Novato, California. He has served in this capacity since 1992, undertaking many innovative projects in the city and earning the respect of the community.

Educated at Golden Gate University and Sonoma State University, Chief Brady served in several cities in California and New Mexico before coming to Novato in 1982 as Captain of both the Operations and Services and Administration Divisions. With a commitment to the principles of Community Policing, he assisted in the development of the city's first Police Advisory and Review Board and the Multi-Cultural Oversight Committee. A broad community collaboration that involved all officers, including service on boards of directors, Community Policing resulted in constant interactions, constructive dialogues and creation of additional successful programs such as:

School Resource Officers project uses uniformed officers on campus as part of the day

to day operations at high schools and middle schools.

Project X is a youth team building project in which officers work with an Auto Shop Class at San Marin High School to build and maintain a drag racing vehicle. It has been painted to look like a police car and has been raced successfully, bringing money back to the program.

Girls Forum, developed after incidents of sexual assault, offers self-defense classes as well as instruction in self-esteem with women officers as role models. It is also supported by Soroptimist and Rotary.

Chief Brady's tenure will be especially remembered for his leadership in confronting hate crimes. I had the privilege of observing his work first hand after the racially motivated stabbing of a young Asian man outside a supermarket in Novato. Under his direction, the Police Department treated the incident as a hate crime from the outset by assigning top staff to the case and comforting the victim. Novato held public meetings to address the crime, resulting in the filming of *Not in Our Town II*, in which the city's response to hate crime is featured as an example to the nation. He continues to promote the use of diversity materials, including those that deal with lesbians and gays, in local classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, Brian Brady's inclusive vision for police work promotes the best in our communities. It is an honor to consider him a friend and to have shared in some of his inspiration and success.

ENACTMENT OF THE NATIONAL
GREAT BLACK AMERICANS COM-
MEMORATION ACT OF 2003, H.R.
2424 AND S. 1233

HON. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the enactment of the National Great Black Americans Commemoration Act of 2003, H.R. 2424 and S. 1233, companion legislation that I introduced along with my friend Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI of Maryland. This bill received bipartisan support in both committees of jurisdiction in the House, as well as bicameral support—having passed quickly to the floor from the Senate Judiciary Committee. I thank the President for signing this legislation into law on June 22, 2004.

With valued input from Drs. Elmer and Joanne Martin, founders of the Great Blacks in Wax Museum, I introduced this bill to help bring long overdue recognition to African Americans who have served our Nation with great distinction, but whose names, faces and achievements may not be well-known by the average citizen. Rest assured that this recognition can and will be accomplished and preserved through expansion of the Great Blacks in Wax Museum—a national treasure located in my district in Baltimore, Maryland.

In addition to the 200 existing figures at the museum, I am pleased to inform that a priority will be placed on exhibits presenting the 22 Black Americans who served in Congress during the 19th century. Several of these 22 were born into slavery. All of these Americans proudly served their constituencies and their

Nation. Other members from the 1900s such as Senator Edward Brooke, Representatives Julian Dixon (D-CA), Oscar Stanton De Priest (R-IL), Louis Stokes (D-OH), Parren J. Mitchell (D-MD), J.C. Watts, Jr. (R-OK) and others will also receive special recognition. Several of the existing figures depict Colin Powell, Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King, Jr., Mary McLeod Bethune and former Representatives Mickey Leland of Texas, as well as, Shirley Chisholm and Adam Clayton Powell of New York.

The expanded museum will focus on Black military veterans of various military engagements, including the Buffalo Soldiers and Tuskegee Airmen; on Black judges and prominent attorneys; and on the role of Blacks in the discovery and settlement of America. It will also showcase Blacks who served in senior civilian Executive Branch positions, such as Ralph Bunche (FDR administration), E. Fredrick Morrow (Eisenhower administration), Robert Weaver (Johnson Administration), William Coleman (Ford administration), Patricia Harris (Carter administration), Louis Sullivan (George H.W. Bush administration), and others who have not received appropriate recognition.

Lastly, this legislation authorizes assistance in establishing a Justice Learning Center as a component of the expanded Museum complex. The Justice Learning Center will include state-of-the-art facilities and resources to educate the public, especially at-risk youth, about the role of African Americans in our nation's judicial system. It will include a special focus on the civil rights movement, and on the role of African Americans as lawmakers, attorneys and in the Judiciary.

Mr. Speaker, the Great Blacks in Wax Museum was founded in 1983 by Dr. Elmer Martin and Dr. Joanne Martin, who started the museum with their own funds carrying a few figures and exhibit materials around the country in their car. Today I am proud to report that the museum currently occupies part of a city block in East Baltimore and includes more than 200 wax figures. It is America's first wax museum of Black history. The museum now receives well over 200,000 visitors a year—more than half of these visitors are school children. I also will mention that several members of Congress and their staff have visited the museum and relayed to me the awesome nature of their visit—how the figures and exhibits both moved and informed—resulting in a truly enriching experience. Enactment makes certain that the Museum can continue its mission to preserve a great part of our nation's history.

I would be remiss if I did not relay to you how important and inspiring this Museum is to its East Baltimore community. The Great Blacks in Wax Museum functions as more than just a museum. It is a stalwart in its community. The Martins established the Museum with the primary motivation "to use education, history and example to help mainly disadvantaged youth overcome feelings of alienation, defeatism and despair." It provides a safe-haven for at-risk youth and offers opportunities for young people in the community to take part in employment, intern and volunteer programs. The Museum has enrichment programs for individuals, families, daycare centers, churches, schools and other non-profit organizations. In keeping with its commitment to community involvement, the Museum's many programs serve as a means for taking learning and cultural enrichment beyond the school walls. The

Justice Learning Center will extend the outreach efforts of the Museum to homeless shelters, halfway houses, adult day care, domestic violence centers, youth residential facilities and other places to reach disadvantaged and/or at-risk youth and families.

Mr. Speaker, enactment of this legislation is a testament to the Martins' persistence and vision. Enactment also means that the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum—a national treasure—will receive needed federal support to ensure that generations yet unborn will be told the story of these great Americans. The Museum will assure that History never forgets this legacy.

Finally, again, I want to thank Representative SENSENBRENNER and his staff Joseph Gibson and Katy Crooks, Representative CONYERS and his staff Lillian German, as well as Representatives POMBO and RAHALL and their staffers, Frank Vitello, Richard Healy and David Watkins for all of their hard work in moving this legislation through their respective Committees. I would especially like to thank my legislative director, Kimberly Ross, in seeing this legislation through to its successful end.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO JIM THRASH

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 23, 2004

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the life and legacy of Jim Thrash of New Meadows, Idaho. Jim bravely battled the Storm King Mountain Fire outside the town of Glenwood Springs, Colorado in 1994, but succumbed to the blaze along with thirteen fellow firefighters while working to protect the city. I personally served as a firefighter and understand the risks they face each and everyday. Witnessing the awful inferno that fateful July day, I know Jim and his comrades battled the fire with the utmost courage and valor. With the tenth anniversary of the Storm King Fire approaching, I believe it appropriate to recognize the sacrifice Jim and the Storm King Firefighters made on behalf of a grateful community, state and Nation.

Jim grew up in Arizona and moved to Idaho with his wife in 1973 where he taught high school Spanish and social studies, and coached varsity baseball. Jim and his wife owned and operated a big game hunting business in Idaho, and he was a member of the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association where he was president, served on the board, and chaired the wilderness committee. He joined the McCall Smokejumpers in 1981, an elite group of firefighters who parachute into rough, mountainous terrain to fight wildfires in areas of forests inaccessible by any other means. He was a dedicated member of his crew, and received a great deal of satisfaction from helping others. Above all, he was devoted to his family and friends.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to rise before this body of Congress and this Nation to pay tribute to the life and memory of Firefighter Jim Thrash. Jim was committed to providing high quality professional fire management services to protect our natural resources; putting himself in harms way for unfamiliar people